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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT MAYSAN: MAYSAN'S TRIBES SEEK POLITICAL ROLE

REF: A. MX-GBR-J2X-FHT-20564
[1](#)B. MX-GBR-J2X-FHT-071003
[1](#)C. MX-GBR-J2X-FHT-20363
[1](#)D. MX-GBR-J2X-FHT-20296

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Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Greg D'Elia for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Maysan reporting cable.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Summary: Tribal members in Maysan are asserting their political relevance by occupying key positions and creating independent advocacy groups. Members of several local tribes, including the Bani Malik, the al-Fartusi, and the al-Gharrawi, occupy prominent roles in local political parties and militias. Tribal members are also establishing groups to pressure the provincial government, including the Maysan Nobles, Council, the National Front for the Salvation of the South, and the Maysan Tribal Council. Tribal leaders and tribal relationships are also being used by political leaders to assist in maintaining security. End Summary.

Politically prominent tribes

[1](#)3. (SBU) Bani Malik: According to the uncle of Deputy Governor Rafa,a abd Al-Jabbar, the Bani Malik tribe is influential in the government. Governor Adhil Mhoder Radhi Al-Maliki and a number of other government officials are reportedly from this tribe.

[1](#)4. (S) al-Fartusi: The Fartusi tribe are marsh Arabs who have settled in and around al-Adel, a town south of the capitol. There are reportedly 20,000 Maysanis who claim this tribal affiliation and thirteen branches. The leader is Shaykh Ali Hassan Sajar al-Fartusi, chair of the Maysan Tribal Council. Members of the tribe hold positions of power in Majjar al-Kabir (MAK), al-Kahir, and al-Adel. Members of the tribe have are also affiliated with anti-coalition militant groups and have been targets of operations in the past. Shaykh Abd al-Jamal al-Fartusi (aka Hajj Hassan Ali al-Fartusi, aka Hassan Ali Mizal al-Fartusi) has been reported as the leader of Harakat Islamiyya fil Iraq (reftel A). Members of the tribe, including Abd al-Jamal, were also targets in OP JORDAN (reftel B).

[1](#)5. (S) al-Gharrawis: A number of members of the al-Gharrawi tribe are linked to the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS) and Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM). According to British sources, Shaykh Ghali Abid Ali al-Gharrawi from the Abu Romana District in al- Amara led ten other shaykhs in brokering the withdrawal of JAM from the streets of the capital following Operation Dorado in March 2006. As of 2004, Shaykh Muhammad al-Gharrawi was reportedly a moderating influence in OMS. Shaykh Haydar al-Gharrawi, aka Abu Ahmed, is a reported JAM Company Commander in the Husayn District of al- Amara

(reftel C).

Maysan Nobles' Council

¶6. (SBU) In 2006, Kareem Mahood al-Muhammadawi, aka Abu Hatim, a member of the an-Nawafil tribe of the Albu Muhammad confederation, established the Maysan Nobles, Council (sometimes referred to as the VIP Council). Abu Hatim was elected General Secretary and the inaugural meeting took place on 30 March 2006. The reported membership was anywhere between 800-1000 with an Executive Committee of 105. Thirty seats were allocated to key tribal leaders, thirty for two representatives of each of the 15 districts of Maysan, and the remainder distributed around various groups including technocrats, academics, women and ethnic minorities. Abu Hatim defined the council as a lobbying group for people who are poorly represented by the Provincial Council (PC), putting pressure on the Governor and the PC to perform, and in due course, putting forward candidates for provincial elections. He stressed that the group was not a political party, but an independent grouping of people who intend to promote technocrats as well as tribal elders to seats on the PC.

¶7. (SBU) In July 2006, a delegation from the Maysan Nobles, Council and additional tribal leaders marched to the PC, where in a three-and-a-half hour heated discussion, they demanded immediate improvements in the security situation. They expressed as their preference that this should be delivered through the legitimate apparatus of the government, but threatened that if the PC and ISF were unable to perform, the tribes would intervene. A further conference was scheduled for 15 July 2006, which was expected to incorporate militia leaders as well as tribes, politicians, and security chiefs, and which was intended to deliver a consensus behind a new security plan for Maysan, focused on curtailing militia/criminal activities. There are conflicting reports regarding why the conference was delayed past the set date

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and it is unclear whether it actually occurred. Abu Hatim blamed the PC for politicizing the conference and causing the delay. Others claimed the delay was a result of disagreements between the tribes

National Front for the Salvation of the South

¶8. (S/NF) The National Front for the Salvation of the South is another group that has reportedly been started by Abu Hatim. According to separate reporting the group,s expressed aim is to combat Iranian influence and militia activity.

Maysan Tribal Council

¶9. (SBU) Based upon reports of its activities, the Maysan Tribal Council seems to be the formal voice for the province,s tribal community. The tribal council is reportedly allied with the councils from Basra and Thi Qar.

¶10. (SBU) On 18 December 2007, six days after a car bomb was detonated in the center of al- Amara, more than 500 tribal members gathered for a conference in the Sports and Youth center of the city. Most of the tribal members were from Maysan with some tribal representation from al-Basra and al-Kut provinces. The conference was held under the banner &Security and Construction Are the Two Essential Pillars for Maysan Prosperity8. The conference was led by the chair of the Maysan Tribal Council, Shaykh Muhammad Hasan Sajar Al-Fartusi, and included a speech by the head of the Provincial Council,s Security Committee Abd al-Lateef (Abu Ahmed) at-Tameemi. The gathering offered tribal members an opportunity to express their views on a variety of issues and

resulted in the issuance of a number of declarations and demands, including commitment to national unity and recognition of federalism as a way to save Iraq from partition; a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign forces; a rejection of armed and illegal groups, including security companies, the MEK, and the PKK; and recognition of the active role of as-Sistani and the "honorable" stance taken by Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim after the explosions.

Keeping the Peace

¶11. (SBU) Tribal leaders and tribal relationships are also being tapped by political leaders to assist in maintaining security. In May 2005, two JAM fighters reportedly bombed al-Manar Engineering Company which belonged to members of the Ka,ab tribe. The tribe,s leadership was infuriated and went directly to the attacker,s families who then agreed to pay a significant sum in damages and banish the two men from the town. Shortly thereafter, the town,s leading tribal shaykhs agreed to punish any militia member who attacked a tribe or its property. The leaders announced that any attackers would lose the right to call themselves by the name of the tribe and be rejected by his tribe. In 2006, homicides during the first five months of the year had declined by 71 percent as compared with the previous five months.

¶12. (SBU) In March 2006, 11 shaykhs helped broker a cease fire between the Iraqi Army and JAM following OPERATION DORADO. The group included leadership from the Albu Darraj, the al-Mussawi, the al-Gharrawi, and the Albu Muhammad. The shaykhs had made an agreement with the Governor and PC during the previous month that fighting would cease. The shaykhs helped broker the ceasefire to demonstrate that, despite the outbreak of violence, they did indeed exercise full control over their constituencies. During a 27 December 2007 PRT meeting with the Maysanis, the PRDC Chairman Mohan Mahi ash-Shabib relayed that an individual was interfering with the construction of the \$14.7M USG-funded surgical hospital being built in al- Amara. The Chairman noted that the individual,s tribal leader was contacted and that the individual was &embarrassed8 in front of his tribe.

OMS opposition

¶13. (S) As tribal members and their leadership step forward they also put themselves as risk from the local militias. A recent report claimed that OMS/JAM was investigating tribes that had allegedly signed an agreement to fight any person or group supported by Iran (reftel D).

¶14. (S) COMMENT. Despite the fact that the Governor and the young technocrats on the PC seem to officially ignore the tribes, tribal leaders are making moves to assert their political influence. It is important to understand the form that these developments are taking as it will help craft the PRT,s engagement with tribally-based organizations and their leadership. The PRT is aggressively seeking to expand our

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contacts with tribal leaders in Maysan. END COMMENT.
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